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ABSTRACT

This manual is planned for use by both community organizations interested in starting literacy programs to serve their neighborhoods and for agencies providing other services to clients who would also benefit from literacy services. It is organized in four parts, which represent various stages in thinking about and starting a new literacy program. Part I focuses on deciding to start a literacy program. Four chapters discuss: evaluation of needs and resources; describe models for literacy programs, with the advantages and disadvantages of each; address the decision to use literacy volunteers' technical assistance; and examine in two case studies how the differences in resources available to each program affected the program's success or failure. Part II deals with planning the program. Four chapters cover hiring staff, recruiting students and volunteer tutors, and planning the library. Three chapters in Part III address starting the program, including enrolling adult learners, training volunteer tutors through the Literacy Volunteers of New York City model, and starting the educational center. Two chapters in Part IV focus on helping the program develop and grow, including creating a community of learners, developing leadership potential among the students, and helping students graduate and move on. Worksheets are provided at the end of some chapters for planning purposes. (YLB)

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How to Start an Effective Adult Literacy Program

By Maureen Schild

Outreach Trainer
Literacy Volunteers of New York City

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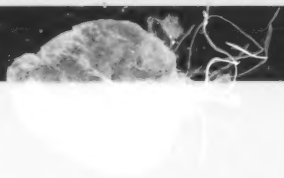
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ABOUT LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF NEW YORK CITY



Literacy Volunteers of New York City is a private, nonprofit organization that was founded in 1973. Literacy Volunteers provides adults who read below a sixth-grade level with free small-group instruction in reading and writing at nine centers in Manhattan and Brooklyn. The volunteers who tutor are the backbone of the program and are guided by professional staff in helping adults gain essential literacy skills.

The Literacy Volunteers Outreach Training Program, funded by the New York Life Foundation, provides free technical assistance to organizations interested in establishing new literacy programs or improving existing services.



An affiliate of Literacy
Volunteers of America

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INTRODUCTION

ILLITERACY ■ THE PROBLEM

The public's awareness of illiteracy in the United States is growing. Still, many people do not understand the full extent of the problem or what it means to be an adult non-reader.

It is estimated that one in five adults—20% of the population—is functionally illiterate. Another 34% of Americans are only marginally literate.

"Illiterate" is a relative term. When our work force consisted mainly of farmers, a person who was able to sign his name might have been considered functionally literate. But today, functioning in our society requires skills such as taking phone messages, reading the newspaper, or being able to read directions in a manual. Thus, the level of "functional illiteracy" has been raised.

The reasons for adult illiteracy are complex. Adult non-readers can be found in every segment of society. They may have left school early, had a physical or emotional disability, or simply needed more help than was available in school. While there is no single cause of illiteracy, there is a definite correlation between poverty and illiteracy. And since in this country there is a relationship between poverty and race, people of color are more likely to be illiterate than whites. A 1975 University of Texas study found that 16% of white adults, 44% of black adults, and 56% of Hispanic adults were functionally illiterate in English.

However, in terms of total numbers there are twice as many white non-readers as black and Hispanic non-readers.

Literacy Volunteers of New York City is concerned about the causes of illiteracy and its effect

on our nation and on our work force. But, on the most basic level we seek to serve the needs of individual students, who are more than "illiterates"; they are diverse members of the community who are trying to improve their lives. The personal dreams and successes of these individuals stand as testimony to the value of comprehensive educational services to adult learners.

Some adult learner success stories

Rebecca Going entered our program in 1985, wanting to read well enough to pass the high school equivalency test and become a gym teacher. While at Literacy Volunteers she improved her reading by two grade levels, wrote poetry and personal stories, and served on the Student Committee. She has graduated from Literacy Volunteers and now is enrolled in a high school equivalency program.

When Rose Colon came to Literacy Volunteers, she couldn't read at all. Now she can read stories and is learning to spell. She looks forward to helping her children with their homework and getting her driver's license. She has just passed the test to get her learner's permit.

Arthur Shamah has graduated from Literacy Volunteers and is enrolled in a high school equivalency course. He plans to go on to college to study computer programming. Arthur credits support he got from other students as the reason he overcame his fear of not being able to read and write. He now heads the first Literacy Volunteers' alumni group.

STARTING A LITERACY PROGRAM

■ MYTHS AND FACTS

Increased publicity has made more people aware of illiteracy and the need for more programs for adult beginning readers. Literacy Volunteers gets many requests from organizations outside

the literacy field interested in starting their own programs. But, the level of expertise and the commitment needed to start and run a quality program are often underestimated.

Below is a chart of some of the myths and facts about managing literacy programs:

Myth:	Fact:
Little real expertise or experience is required to run a literacy program.	Literacy education is a specialized field, like social work or accounting, which requires training and expertise. Organizations like Literacy Volunteers hire professional educators as staff members.
Recruiting students is easy, since so many adults are functionally illiterate.	Many long-established literacy programs have difficulty recruiting students. Agencies wishing to start new programs need to develop strategies to reach out to potential students.
Recruiting volunteers is easy.	Volunteers are not easily found. A strategy for recruiting volunteers needs to be developed. Agencies which already use volunteers for other purposes or which have strong ties to their communities may have good sources of volunteers. Other agencies may need to develop outreach services or rely on volunteer job banks.
Anyone who knows how to read can teach someone else to read.	A quality educational program requires that volunteers be given rigorous training before, and ongoing staff support after, they start to instruct students.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual is planned for use by both community organizations which are interested in starting literacy programs to serve their neighborhoods, and for agencies which are providing other services to clients who would also benefit from literacy services. It is assumed that an existing organization which will host the literacy program is already in place.

Our booklet offers models and suggestions based on Literacy Volunteers' experience since 1973 in providing instructional services. However, it assumes that each organization will need to develop a program geared towards its own needs. Worksheets are provided at the end of some chapters for planning purposes.

The manual is organized in four parts, which represent various stages in thinking about and starting a new literacy program:

- Part 1 ■ Deciding to start a literacy program, including evaluating needs and assessing your organization's resources to start and maintain a program.
- Part 2 ■ Planning for your program, including hiring staff, recruiting students and tutors, and planning your library.
- Part 3 ■ Starting your program, including enrolling adult learners, training volunteer tutors, and starting your educational center.
- Part 4 ■ Helping your program develop and grow, including creating a community of learners, developing leadership potential among your students, and helping students graduate and move on.



PART I:

DECIDING TO ESTABLISH A LITERACY PROGRAM

CHAPTER 1 ■ EVALUATING NEEDS AND RESOURCES

- A Program to Serve Your Own Clients
- A Program to Serve the Community
- Determining Your Resources

CHAPTER 2 ■ CHOOSING A MODEL FOR STAFFING YOUR LITERACY PROGRAM

- Paid Staff as Instructors
- Paid Instructors and Volunteer Teaching Assistants
- Volunteer Tutors

CHAPTER 3 ■ DECIDING TO USE LITERACY VOLUNTEERS' TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Literacy Volunteers' Educational Approach
- Literacy Volunteers' Technical Assistance

CHAPTER 4 ■ LAUNCHING A LITERACY PROGRAM

- Case Study 1
- Case Study 2

CHAPTER 1: EVALUATING NEEDS AND RESOURCES

Literacy Volunteers gets requests for technical assistance in setting up programs from community organizations, such as churches and settlement houses, and social service agencies, such as mental health facilities and rehabilitation centers.

These agencies fall into two categories:

- social service agencies that want to offer literacy instruction to clients they are already serving in other ways, such as drug or alcohol rehabilitation programs, or
- organizations that want to serve the literacy needs of the general community.

The considerations involved in these two different types of programs vary significantly and will be discussed separately.

A PROGRAM TO SERVE YOUR OWN CLIENTS

Literacy Volunteers has helped many organizations start programs to serve their own clients. They have included mental health facilities, drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers, and crisis centers that have clients who also need literacy services.

Examples of organizations that have started client-based literacy programs include:

- The Bridge and the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health, two New York City day facilities that serve the mentally ill, have started literacy programs for their patients. Many of these patients had a history of irregular schooling related to their illnesses.
- The Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Cen-

ter in Manhattan has started a comprehensive education program that includes a literacy division. Clients receiving drug and alcohol rehabilitation in a residential setting obtain skills they will need to get jobs when they leave the center.

- Covenant House of New York City has identified literacy services as one of the many services it needs to provide to homeless and run-away youth.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Before starting literacy services for your own clients, your agency should consider the following questions:

Do you need basic literacy services, a higher-level reading program, or an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) program?

Screening should be done to identify how many clients are in need of and interested in literacy services. Clients who are not native English speakers and who are not orally fluent in English will probably need an ESOL program. For native English speakers, an oral reading inventory, such as the Reading Evaluation and Adult Diagnosis (READ) can be used to determine individual reading levels. (The READ can be ordered from Literacy Volunteers of America.) The READ can be used to screen out adults who read above the functional illiteracy level, considered to be fifth grade level or below.

Should you start an in-house program or refer clients to existing programs?

You should weigh the advantages of starting your own program against the advantages of sending clients to existing programs in the community.

Advantages to sending your clients to programs in the community:

- These programs are already established and may have resources unavailable to your agency, such as libraries and well-trained education professionals on staff.
- Such places nourish a learning community for new readers which helps end their feelings of isolation. Your agency may not have enough potential students to provide this feeling of community.
- Some clients may prefer the anonymity of going to a literacy program outside your agency.
- If your agency serves clients on a short-term basis, you may not work with people long enough to teach them to read.

Advantages of starting your own program:

- Your clients may not feel comfortable going to outside programs.
- Programs serving the general population may not have the expertise to work with special populations like the mentally ill, homeless, or substance abusers.
- It might be most effective to integrate literacy services into your larger program. For example, the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health has started a literacy group taught by trained mental health professionals who integrate literacy services into the Postgraduate Center's comprehensive program of rehabilitation therapy.

A PROGRAM TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY

Many organizations, including churches, synagogues, settlement houses, and the YMCA, have

contacted Literacy Volunteers for help in starting literacy programs. The considerations involved in starting literacy programs to serve the general community are different than those in starting client-based literacy programs. Generally, these programs are more difficult to start because social service programs already have a readily available source of students—the agency's own clients.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Who is the targeted student population?

At the outset you will need to identify the prospective student population for your program. Even in communities where it appears that the need for a literacy program is obvious, it is important to contact existing literacy programs to get information on their experience recruiting students for their programs. It would also be important to find out who these programs serve so that you will not be duplicating efforts.

Why should your organization start a literacy program?

The more that education is central to the overall purpose of an organization, the more likely it is that a literacy program will succeed. Organizations that have found that a literacy program fits in with their overall goals include: union education programs, neighborhood centers and settlement houses, and religious institutions.

Some alumni associations and religious institutions in wealthy neighborhoods have decided not to start literacy programs because it would take them too far from their basic goals.

DETERMINING YOUR RESOURCES

Agencies interested in starting client-based literacy programs or those that wish to serve the general community both need to carefully evaluate their resources to start and maintain a program. These resources should be available for a minimum of three years.

The following are the minimal resources required to start a literacy program: institutional support, space, staff, and funds.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

From the outset you will need a commitment to the literacy program from the highest levels of your organization. It will take time to garner this support, but in the long run it is necessary to run a viable program.

SPACE

In cities where rent is expensive, you may have trouble finding adequate space for a literacy program. A permanent space in your organization's building or offices is ideal, but space can also be rented elsewhere or donated by corporations, religious institutions, or schools. Here are some guidelines for appropriate space for a literacy program:

- During tutoring hours, the space should be used only for the literacy program. It is not appropriate to use part of a children's classroom or a cafeteria while it is in use by other people.
- There must be adequate light, heat, ventilation, and adult-sized furniture. It is preferable to have furniture that can be moved to accommodate different group configurations.
- A secured area to store materials for the program is necessary. Books, files, office supplies,

and typewriters or computers should be stored in locked cabinets and be accessible during tutoring hours.

- The space should be available for the time period the program meets, for example, Tuesday and Thursday from 5 p.m. — 8 p.m.

STAFF

Many programs assume that a volunteer can be responsible for running the program, but Literacy Volunteers has found that even a small literacy program needs at least one paid staff member with educational experience to direct it.

Staff requirements will vary depending upon the nature of your parent organization and the model and size of the program you intend to establish. If yours is a small program, you may have one person to handle all aspects of the program. Large programs like Literacy Volunteers have specialized staff in charge of various aspects of the program. These include a tutor trainer, center director, coordinator of volunteers, and student intake coordinator. While initially your program may be too small to require hiring so many people, these job categories will give some idea of tasks involved in starting and maintaining a literacy program. Beware of asking one staff member to take on too many responsibilities! Chapters 2 and 5 will give you more detailed information on staffing.

MONEY

One resource no literacy program can do without is money. The amount of money you will need for your program will depend on the staffing model you choose, the size of the program, and whether you can make use of current resources, such as staff and space for the literacy program.

In developing a budget, you should consider the following categories: rent, overhead, library books, and salaries and benefits.

WORKSHEET: ASSESSING YOUR NEED TO START A PROGRAM

For agencies that want to start literacy services for their own clients:

- 1 ■ How many clients do you have who read below the 6th grade level?

a) ■ How have you determined this?

- _____
- 2 ■ How many of these clients are interested in attending a literacy program?

- _____
- 3 ■ Do you work with clients for at least a year?

- _____
- 4 ■ Do clients have time to devote to an educational program in addition to other responsibilities?

- _____
- 5 ■ List the advantages of starting your own program versus the advantages of referring clients to programs in the community.

For programs that want to serve the general population in their communities:

- 1 ■ Who is your targeted learner population?

- _____
- 2 ■ How have you established the need these prospective learners have for literacy services?

- _____
- 3 ■ How do you plan to recruit these learners?

- _____
- 4 ■ What is your organization's mission and goals?

- _____
- 5 ■ How does starting an adult literacy program fit in with these goals and with existing programs you run?

WORKSHEET:

YOUR RESOURCES TO START AND MAINTAIN A LITERACY PROGRAM

Institutional Support

- 1 ■ What type of support from the administration and board of directors of your organization do you have for your literacy program?

- 2 ■ If you do not have the necessary support, how do you plan to get it?

Money

- 1 ■ How much money can your agency or organization budget for a literacy program per year?

- 2 ■ Write a first and second year budget for this program.

- 3 ■ Will the source of this money remain stable for three years?

Space

- 1 ■ Do you have space on your premises to hold a literacy program?

- 2 ■ If you have space:

■ Is it available at least twice a week during all hours when tutoring will be held? _____

■ Is it well-lit? _____

■ Does it have adequate ventilation? _____

■ Does it have adult-sized furniture? _____

■ Is there accessible storage space for books and other equipment and materials? _____

■ Do you have space for staff desks? _____

■ If you don't have space on your premises, how do you plan to obtain it? _____

Staffing

See Chapter 5 for job descriptions for staff positions.

- 1 ■ What staff positions will you need for your literacy program?

- 2 ■ Will you need to hire staff to fill these positions?

- 3 ■ If your present staff will be taking on new responsibilities, how much time will they have to devote to this new project?

- 4 ■ If you plan to hire staff, have you included this expense in your budget?

CHAPTER 2: CHOOSING A MODEL FOR STAFFING YOUR LITERACY PROGRAM

After you decide to start a literacy program, you need to decide on the staffing model for your program. Below is a description of several possible models for literacy programs, with the advantages and disadvantages of each model.

MODEL A: Paid staff as instructors

Many basic skills programs throughout the country, including the federal government's Adult Basic Education program, use this model. Paid instructors, preferably with experience teaching basic reading and writing to adults, are hired to teach classes of literacy students. Class size may range from 10-25 students.

■ Advantages

This model eliminates the necessity of recruiting, training, and supporting volunteer tutors. If professional educators with experience working with adults can be hired, the quality of instruction may be superior to programs using volunteer tutors.

■ Disadvantages

To be cost effective, classes may need to be large. Large class size makes it difficult to work effectively with adult beginning readers. Smaller groups enable the program to become more learner-centered, with students working on personal goals and taking charge of their own learning. In addition, it is hard to find instructors with direct experience working with adults, and using elementary or secondary school teachers may prove unsatisfactory.

MODEL B: Paid instructors and volunteer teaching assistants

Not many programs use this model, but Literacy Volunteers has had considerable success with it in its Outreach Training Program.

■ Advantages

Teaching assistants enable classes to be broken down into smaller groups where students can participate more actively in reading and writing discussions and activities. Using volunteers under a teacher's supervision keeps costs down, but still enables each class to be led by a paid instructor.

■ Disadvantages

Adding volunteer teaching assistants to classroom programs will require changes in the structure and staffing of a program. In addition, some volunteers may prefer to be in a primary tutoring role.

MODEL C: Volunteer tutors

Literacy Volunteers of New York City and many other programs throughout the country, including other Literacy Volunteers of America affiliates and Laubach Literacy, use volunteers as tutors. In many programs volunteers tutor one-on-one in their homes; in others volunteers work with small groups of students at learning centers.

■ Advantages

Tutoring can be done in small groups or one-on-one. The more instructors needed in a program, the more cost-effective it can be to use volunteers.

In addition, the enthusiasm and varied backgrounds of volunteers can add to the vitality of a program. Often, volunteers become strong advocates for literacy in their communities. Volunteers and students working together can promote interracial and intercultural understanding. Volunteers can also become effective paid staff.

■ Disadvantages

A volunteer literacy program requires extensive staff support in the form of recruitment, screening, training, evaluating, and supporting volunteers. Therefore, for a small program, using volunteer tutors may not save much money. In some cases, volunteers may not be as skilled as trained educational professionals.



CHAPTER 3: DECIDING TO USE LITERACY VOLUNTEERS' TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS' EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

Since 1973 Literacy Volunteers of New York City has operated educational centers in New York City where adults learn to read and write. In addition, we provide technical assistance to other agencies interested in starting literacy programs or improving existing services. Like other literacy programs, we train tutors in instructional methods consistent with a specific educational philosophy. In deciding to use our assistance it is important for your organization to consider whether your vision of a literacy program is similar to ours.

The basic elements of our educational philosophy and teaching methods are listed below.

We are a learner-centered program.

This means that adult learners participate fully in every level of our program—on our board of directors, on our staff, and in our learning groups.

Learner participation in management. Learners participate in the governance of the organization at the highest level of the organization—serving on the board of directors and on board committees. At Literacy Volunteers, a representative elected by his or her fellow students has served on the board since 1984.

In addition, students and graduates now serve in varied staff positions: as advocates who speak about literacy at national conferences and on radio and television as assistants to the center directors and as intake counselors for the student enrollment program.

Learner participation in instruction. Students work toward their own learning goals according to interests and needs. They are involved in teaching as well as learning.

Rather than having a set curriculum, we encourage students to develop goals and choose reading and writing projects that enhance these goals. For example, a student interested in finding a new job might learn to fill out job applications and read want ads in the newspaper. Another student in the same group who is interested in cooking might learn to read cook books and write down his or her own recipes.

Within an instructional group, students teach each other by using approaches such as peer tutoring and sharing strategies they have developed for acquiring new skills.

A participatory literacy program has students or former students involved in every facet of the organization. Throughout this manual we will suggest ways to enhance the participatory nature of your literacy program.

We teach reading and writing in small groups.

Literacy and the acquisition of literacy are social practices involving the use of language in real situations for real reasons. The group is a small learning community in which students try out their new skills and talk about reading and writing with their peers. Students are encouraged to help each other, with the tutor acting as the group facilitator. Our group approach encourages active participation of all group members in the learning process.

We use whole language approaches to teaching.

Skills and strategies to improve reading and writing are learned in the context of using meaningful language. Most of the students' time is spent on tasks such as reading books and writing to communicate thoughts and ideas. Discussing the meaning of reading and writing with individual students is an important part of this process.

Before deciding whether Literacy Volunteers is the right organization for you to work with, it is important for you to visit one of our centers. We also recommend investigating other programs in your area to learn about a variety of instructional approaches.

Literacy Volunteers' Technical Assistance

When Literacy Volunteers joins in partnerships with other organizations, we provide technical assistance in starting literacy services or in improving existing literacy programs. This technical assistance can include:

- A consultation to help you assess the needs of your organization
- Help in tailoring a program to your constituency
- Guidance in recruiting, screening, and training volunteer tutors
- Assistance in recruiting and screening students
- Staff training to make your program self-sufficient



CHAPTER 4 : LAUNCHING A LITERACY PROGRAM

In the winter of 1989 two organizations contacted Literacy Volunteers of New York City for help in starting new literacy programs: a church in an inner-city neighborhood and a Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center. The Salvation Army literacy program has been successful, while the church program never got off the ground. In the following two case studies, we will examine how the differences in resources available to each program affected the program's success or failure.

CASE STUDY 1: The Pitfalls of Starting a Literacy Program Without Sufficient Resources

In December 1989, a church in an inner-city neighborhood contacted Literacy Volunteers for technical assistance; they wanted to start a literacy program to serve their general community and work-release inmates from a local correctional institution. Despite good intentions, hard work, and some resources this program was not successful.

On the plus side, the church had the following resources:

Institutional support. The church's pastor supported the program and assigned a church staff member to coordinate it. The pastor met several times with Literacy Volunteers for consultations. Church members were also interested in working with the program as volunteers.

Space. Room for the literacy program was available in the church.

Potential tutors. Some church members were interested in being trained by Literacy Volunteers.

Possible sources to recruit students. The local correctional facility and the surrounding community were likely sources.

On the negative side, while the church had these resources, both Literacy Volunteers and the church did not realize that the church fell short of two key components—adequate staff and adequate funds to hire more staff and to buy materials. The church's new literacy program coordinator had other responsibilities that prevented her from devoting sufficient time to the program. She also had little time to avail herself of the staff training offered by Literacy Volunteers.

Because of lack of staff resources the program failed. Sufficient students were not recruited, volunteer tutors were not effectively screened, and student reading materials were not obtained. Ultimately, these problems could have been alleviated by hiring a full-time coordinator for the literacy program, but the church was not able to raise enough funds.

This case study shows that it is not sufficient to have only *some* of the resources necessary to start a literacy program; an organization that starts a literacy program without all the necessary resources to effectively follow through is doing a disservice to its community.

Below is another case study, this one an example of a successful literacy program.

CASE STUDY 2: The Success of a Program with Sufficient Resources

In September 1989 the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC) in Manhattan decided to commit itself to adding educational services to its program of drug and alcohol rehabili-

tation. A proposal for education services at the center was drafted. This proposal included literacy as one of seven areas of concentration, including ESOL and high school equivalency.

Assessing Needs

Regionally, the Salvation Army had decided to add educational services to its individual treatment programs to further the overall goal of the treatment program: to prepare clients to live alcohol-free lives and assume roles as productive members of society. In addition, the Salvation Army decided that providing educational services in-house would be more appropriate and practical than referring clients to programs in the community. In December 1989, when Literacy Volunteers was first contacted, the ARC already had two literacy classes taught by a volunteer. The program needed to be expanded, with more of the responsibility taken on by ARC staff members. The Literacy Volunteers program was chosen as the model for the expanded tutoring program.

Clients at the ARC had been tested or were already attending the literacy classes when the proposal was drafted, so their need for literacy services was already established.

Identifying Resources

In his proposal the education coordinator identified the following resources:

Institutional Support. From the beginning, the program had the support of the administrator of the ARC, as well as support of the regional office.

Space. The ARC owns its own building. A large room was available with space for tutoring, training, and an office for the coordinator.

Staff. In-house staff with expertise in education was available. The responsibilities of the education coordinator were detailed in the proposal.

Budget. Because the education program was part of the existing operations at the ARC, some of the expenses were already being covered. Through its thrift shop operations, the ARC was able to generate additional money for materials. The education coordinator went to local corporations for donated computers.

A Plan. The proposal set out a detailed plan for starting educational services. A time frame for implementing this plan was developed.

Securing Technical Assistance

Literacy Volunteers was first contacted in November 1989. After Literacy Volunteers' staff met with the volunteer who was teaching the literacy classes and with the ARC education coordinator, the following plan was developed:

Recruiting students. The Salvation Army would identify and screen students appropriate for the program.

Recruiting tutors. Initially the ARC planned to recruit their own volunteers, however to speed up the process, Literacy Volunteers referred some volunteers from its waiting lists.

Screening volunteers. Prospective volunteers were invited to an orientation at the ARC. This on-site orientation enabled the volunteers to learn more about the Salvation Army Rehabilitation Program and to be screened by both organizations.

Training volunteer tutors. Literacy Volunteers conducted a training workshop at the ARC geared toward their specific needs. Since prospective students were waiting to enroll in the program, they participated in reading and writing activities along with the tutors during the first two sessions of the tutor training.

Starting a student library. With Literacy Volunteers' assistance, the ARC ordered materials from publishers and borrowed books from a local library.

Coordinating and managing the program. These responsibilities were taken on by the ARC education coordinator, with support from Literacy Volunteers. Initially, this support entailed frequent meetings and phone contact to help the ARC start tutoring groups, obtain reading materials, and support tutors. After the first few months, the ARC Program was able to operate independently with occasional consultations.

By the spring of 1990 this literacy program was flourishing and the ARC had added other components to its educational program. When comparing the Salvation Army program to the church program in the first case study, it is clear that the Salvation Army program had two resources unavailable to the church—a full-time coordinator and funds to pay his salary as well as other necessary expenses, like reading materials.

Unlike the part-time coordinator of the church program, the full-time ARC educational coordinator had the time to take on the responsibilities of managing his program and to take advantage of the technical assistance and training offered by Literacy Volunteers. The ARC educational coordinator developed a plan for his literacy program, recruited and screened students and volunteers, set up recordkeeping systems, and integrated literacy services into the total ARC rehabilitation program. The Salvation Army program quickly became self-sufficient. Unfortunately, because of its lack of resources, the church program in the first case study never recruited enough students.



PART II:

PLANNING YOUR LITERACY PROGRAM

CHAPTER 5 ■ HIRING STAFF

- Staff Recruitment
- Job Descriptions

CHAPTER 6 ■ RECRUITING STUDENTS

- Recruiting for a Client-based Program
- Recruiting for a Community Program

CHAPTER 7 ■ RECRUITING AND SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

- Assessing Your Needs for Volunteers
- Recruiting Volunteers
- Screening Volunteers
- Selecting Volunteers

CHAPTER 8 ■ PLANNING A STUDENT-CENTERED LIBRARY

- Books for Adult Literacy Students
- Selection of Reading Materials
- Book Ordering
- List of Publishers and Distributors

CHAPTER 5: HIRING STAFF

Unless you already have qualified educational staff working for your organization, you will need to train current staff or hire new staff to start and manage your program.

The best sources for recruiting qualified educational staff are literacy clearinghouses, schools of education, and educational publications. Your job openings should be listed with these educational resources as well as local newspapers.

Job Descriptions

You will need to determine how many staff positions you require, and then write job descriptions for these positions.

Below are job descriptions for four staff positions. A small program will not need four people, but someone in your program must be able to assume all the responsibilities listed.

CENTER DIRECTOR

Responsible for ensuring that the best possible learning conditions exist for each student.

Responsibilities:

A. Education

- Assigns students to small groups and monitors group activities.
- Assesses student progress.
- Observes groups and offers feedback to volunteers.
- Evaluates instructional materials.

B. Supervision, Training, and Development

- Supervises volunteers and any paid staff working at the center.
- Plans educational meetings, workshops, and special activities for tutors and students.

C. Administration

- Prepares student and tutor records and reports.
- Monitors tutor and student attendance.

Minimum Position Requirements:

B.A. and at least three years related work experience in adult literacy field, with one year supervisory and/or training experience. Good interpersonal, analytic, and organizational skills.

TUTOR TRAINER

Designs and coordinates the training of volunteer tutors.

Responsibilities:

- Plans and conducts training workshops for volunteer tutors.
- Develops and updates materials used in initial tutor training.
- Collaborates with other staff to plan and provide follow-up training for tutors.
- Plans and conducts training for volunteers other than tutors, as needed.

Minimum Position Requirements:

M.A. or M.S. in education or related literacy field and/or four years experience in education, preferably with adults. Experience in training, communication, or a related field. Good skills in organization, communication, interpersonal relations, and supervision.

COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Screens and recruits volunteer staff, serves as an advocate for volunteers, and develops retention, recognition and recordkeeping procedures.

Responsibilities:

- Identifies the need for volunteer positions and develops job descriptions for the positions.
- Recruits volunteer staff; designs and implements effective intake procedures for potential volunteers.
- Serves as a volunteer advocate; represents the volunteer viewpoint to paid staff, and communicates volunteers' needs and concerns.
- Designs and develops procedures to facilitate retention and recognition of volunteers.
- Designs and implements recordkeeping systems to keep track of volunteer activity, and to generate reports on this activity.

Minimum Position Requirements:

B.A. with at least two years experience as a volunteer or in a staff position with a volunteer organization. Certificate in Volunteer Administration preferred. Should have experience in training and/or supervising volunteers. Good communication, interpersonal relations, and organizational skills.

COORDINATOR OF STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

Responsible for developing, coordinating, and supervising the student enrollment process. Holds intake sessions, tests and screens incoming students, and makes referrals to other programs, as needed.

Responsibilities:

- Identifies student recruitment needs and plans recruitment drives.
- Handles phone calls from prospective students.
- Plans and coordinates orientations for incoming students.
- Keeps records of student intake and test results to pass on to educational staff.
- Supervises staff or volunteers who assist with student orientations.

Minimum Position Requirements:

B.A. and/or at least three years experience in the literacy field. Needs good organizational, communication and interpersonal skills.



CHAPTER 6: RECRUITING STUDENTS

Whether you are serving the general community or in-house clients, developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy for recruiting students are the first and most important steps for your literacy program. No matter how good it is in other respects, a program will fail if it doesn't reach its targeted learner population. First, we will discuss recruiting students for a literacy program serving in-house clients who are currently receiving other agency services. Then, we will discuss recruiting students for a program serving the general community.

RECRUITING FOR A CLIENT-BASED PROGRAM

Since your agency already has some contact with clients who may need literacy services, recruitment will take place within your organization. Staff working with clients may be able to identify people who are low-level readers. The job of the person in charge of literacy services will be to convince these clients to try out the new program.

Some organizations that Literacy Volunteers has worked with have made attendance at literacy classes mandatory. Once clients in need of the services were identified through use of screening procedures such as standardized tests, these clients were assigned to the literacy program. This approach was in keeping with the mandatory nature of other types of rehabilitation offered by these organizations.

Other programs have offered literacy services to clients on a voluntary basis. Here, publicizing the program in-house was important. At one mental health facility, the literacy program coordinator informally spoke with patients while they were engaged in recreational activities. She also invited volunteer tutors to meet these prospective students.

Once the literacy program is started, clients in the program can be the most effective spokespeople for it. They can help recruit other clients.

RECRUITING FOR A COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Recruiting of students is more difficult for these programs than for client-based literacy programs since they do not have a ready source of students. Although an estimated one of five adult Americans reads below the sixth grade level, these adults are often reluctant to identify themselves, or fail to hear about programs where they can improve their skills.

A 1989 study by the Literacy Assistance Center in New York City, "Focus on Adult Literacy: Expectations, Experience, and Needs of New York City's Adult Literacy Students," showed that the majority of adults who attend literacy programs hear about the programs in the following ways: from family or friends (42%), from a social service agency (15%), from TV or radio (14%), or from another education program (14%).

Ways to recruit adult learners

Get input from your agency's prospective students or other adult learners. Suggestions and involvement from the people you hope to serve will prove invaluable.

Network with other agencies. Recruitment should involve all relevant segments of the community, not just the learner population. People such as employment counselors, school counselors, and clergy should be targeted since they may know prospective students.

Use the media. Develop public service announcements for broadcast on radio and television. Some of the most effective announcements involve students telling about their own experiences in the program and inviting others to join them.

Develop posters and brochures. Distribute these widely. Some materials may be addressed directly to adult learners themselves, other materials to people who know potential adult learners. Flyers and posters addressed to potential students should be clearly printed and very easy to read.

Give personal presentations for community groups. Contact churches, unions, block associations, and other groups to make presentations to their members. Adult learners in your program or in other literacy programs are often the most effective spokespeople.



CHAPTER 7: RECRUITING AND SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

We have found that the effective use of volunteers requires the following:

ASSESSING YOUR NEEDS FOR VOLUNTEERS

You need to assess your agency's needs and write job descriptions for positions you wish to fill with volunteers. Literacy Volunteers of New York City uses volunteers in a variety of capacities. In addition to tutoring, volunteers serve as intake counselors, assist with testing at learning centers, take charge of center libraries, record books on audio tape, and work on the publishing project.

Expanding the options for volunteers enables an organization to make use of the talents of volunteers who may be unable to make the more extensive time commitment required of tutors.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

Your program should develop and use a strategy for recruiting volunteers. You may choose to recruit volunteers yourself or rely on other agencies to refer them to you. If you choose to rely on referrals, volunteer action councils or local literacy clearinghouses often are the best sources.

Recruiting your own volunteers requires networking with other organizations, using public service announcements, and other public relations techniques. A brochure should be developed to send out to interested volunteers and organizations likely to have volunteers.

SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

The application process. It is helpful to follow up a volunteer's initial inquiry with an informational mailing that includes a written application for the volunteer to fill out and return by mail. Information on the application will help staff members match volunteer interests and backgrounds with available opportunities. See the end of this chapter for a sample application form.

In deciding what questions to ask on an application or in an interview, it is important to make sure you don't violate laws regarding discrimination in employment. These laws apply to volunteers as well as paid staff. Since the laws in each state and city vary, check with your local labor bureau or human rights commission.

Screening interview and orientation. This is a two-way information exchange for the organization and for the volunteer. Information the prospective volunteer receives at the orientation enables him or her to make an educated decision about volunteering. The organization obtains information about the prospective volunteer's background, attitudes, and behavior in group situations.

Literacy Volunteers of New York City holds group orientations, attended by about 20 prospective volunteers. This group orientation has the following elements:

- It is located at a learning center so prospective volunteers can get a first-hand view of our educational program.

- Volunteers learn about Literacy Volunteers from people involved in our organization — staff, volunteer tutors and students. Staff members describe the organization, education program, training required, expectations and job options available. Tutors describe their own experiences in the program. Students talk about why they came to the program, how it has helped them, and what actually happens in their tutoring group.
- Volunteers participate in a group reading session similar to a regular session in our educational program. They are asked to read *The Big Apple Journal* (a publication of student writing) and discuss it in small groups. This activity shows the prospective volunteers what the tutoring session is like and enables staff who are screening the volunteers to see them participate in a group. Since Literacy Volunteers works with students in groups, it is important for us to gauge the group skills of the prospective volunteers.
- Prospective volunteers meet other people interested in volunteering. This engenders enthusiasm and excitement for volunteering and is the first step toward building a feeling of cooperation and camaraderie among the volunteers.

SELECTING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers with appropriate skills are invited to participate in the literacy program. The decision of which volunteers to invite is made by staff and experienced volunteers after the orientation.

Criteria considered during screening includes:

- Does the volunteer support the mission, philosophy and values of the program?
- Does it appear that the volunteer can make the necessary commitment of time and effort for the volunteer option he or she has chosen?
- Does the volunteer have the necessary background, skills, and personality for the job? Each volunteer option may require different skills and experience.
- Will the volunteer work well with the learner population? Here we look for willingness to learn, flexibility, and an attitude of respect toward adult learners.

Agreement of Volunteer Commitment

Asking every volunteer to sign a written agreement impresses upon him or her the seriousness of the commitment involved and helps to clarify expectations. This agreement includes obligations of the volunteer toward the agency (e.g., a minimum time commitment) and obligations of the agency toward the volunteer (e.g., training for the job). Literacy Volunteers shows incoming volunteers a sample agreement of commitment during the orientation, and then asks them to sign the agreement before they attend the training.



SAMPLE VOLUNTEER JOB OPTION LIST

Intake Counselor

Duties: Lead small group discussions at orientation sessions for new students; conduct individual interviews with new students and administer placement tests.

Commitment: At least two evenings per month, 2-3 hours per evening.

Testing Coordinator

Duties: Schedule, administer and correct tests for all students who have completed a 50-hour instructional cycle. Active participation in all aspects of the center and regular consultations with Center Director.

Commitment: One or two sessions a week, for a total of 3 hours per week.

Resource Coordinator

Duties: Organize books and other learning materials in the site library; help tutors and students find appropriate materials; organize special interest visits around the city.

Commitment: One or two sessions for a total of 3 hours per week.

Reading and Writing Tutor

Duties: Work twice weekly with 3-7 students; plan learning activities appropriate for each student; consult with Center Director on a regular basis. (May work with a co-tutor.)

Commitment: Two sessions per week, 2 hours each session.

Math Tutor

Duties: Plan and provide instruction in basic arithmetic skills.

Commitment: One or two sessions per week for a total of 3 hours.

Publishing Project

Duties: Copyedit, proofread, copywrite, interview, research, etc. for our books and magazines for adult learners.

Commitment: Flexible

Computer Assistant

Duties: Organize computer learning materials; provide basic instruction on computer operation; help tutors and students select software appropriate to educational needs.

Commitment: One or two evenings for a total of 3 hours per week.

Book Recorder

Duties: Organize and record written materials in audio cassette form; help students find ways to make learning materials more accessible.

Commitment: One or two evenings per month for a total of 4 hours.

Office Worker (Central Office)

Duties: Handle phones, typing, filing, liaison with students and staff.

Commitment: As available, Monday to Friday, 9-5.

Special Projects

Our outreach program, which gives assistance to other organizations starting literacy programs, will need volunteer tutors from time to time. The commitment and duties are similar to that of reading and writing tutors described above.

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

(Note: This application is sent to volunteers with the list of job options.)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone numbers: (Work) _____ (Home) _____

Date _____

Job Title (current or most recent position) _____

Place of Employment _____

1 ■ How did you hear about our literacy program? _____

2 ■ Why do you want to become a volunteer in our program? _____

3 ■ What experiences, knowledge, or abilities do you have that will enable you to work effectively with adult beginning readers? _____

4 ■ Which volunteer options do you prefer? _____

Reading and writing tutor _____

(List other options) _____

5 ■ What hours are you available? _____

Earliest possible starting time _____

Latest possible ending time _____

6 ■ How long can you commit to volunteering in our program? _____

SAMPLE AGREEMENT OF COMMITMENT

I, _____
commit myself to a minimum of six months of service as a _____
(job title)
with Literacy Volunteers of New York City.

I understand the educational philosophy and methods of Literacy Volunteers and agree to work in a manner consistent with this philosophy.

I recognize that I am joining a learning community and will treat other members of that community with courtesy and respect.

I have read, understood and agreed to abide by the policies and procedures described in the Literacy Volunteers policy manual.

I understand that my performance will be directed and evaluated by my staff supervisor on a regular basis and that my continuation in the program will be based on this evaluation.

If I foresee that I will no longer be able to fulfill my responsibilities, I will provide my supervisor with one month's notice and complete an exit interview.

Signature

Date

WORKSHEET: RECRUITING AND SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

1 ■ Which positions do you want to fill with volunteer staff?

2 ■ Write job descriptions for these positions.

3 ■ How many positions do you want to fill?

a. How many volunteers will you need to recruit to fill positions?

4 ■ How do you plan to recruit these volunteers?

5 ■ From what pool of volunteers do you expect to draw? (retired people, working people, people in/outside the neighborhood, people with specific expertise).

6 ■ What intake and screening procedure do you plan to use?

CHAPTER 8: PLANNING A STUDENT-CENTERED LIBRARY

Many students who come to literacy programs have little or no experience with books, or for that matter with written language in general. As Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, has pointed out, a community without its own literature does not experience written language as a living element, but when a community creates literature rooted in that community's experience, the community becomes literate.

BOOKS FOR ADULT LITERACY STUDENTS

To support a student-centered learning approach in which students pick their own reading materials, it is important to have a variety of interesting and readable books available in a literacy program. The whole-language teaching approach encourages meaningful reading by using real books instead of workbooks or exercise books. Although some of these books may be very easy to read, they are written for adults and not children.

Until fairly recently, few materials were written specifically for the community of adult beginning readers. Fortunately, in the past few years, many literacy programs have started publishing their own books, often written by students. These student-written stories are often about experiences common to many adult beginning readers—about growing up in the South, about drug addiction, about wanting to learn to read but having to work, about coming to a literacy program. Reading this literature sparks other new readers to write about their own experiences, inspiring bold new stories about the road to literacy.

SELECTION OF READING MATERIALS

A literacy center library should offer a wide range of materials in terms of subject matter and reading level.

When selecting materials, take into consideration the following characteristics of the adult learners to be served:

- reading level
- ethnic or racial background
- gender
- age
- interests

If new books are being chosen for an already existing program, try to get student input before ordering. Keeping this in mind, it is advisable to select books from each of these categories: fiction; biography; social studies; science; math; coping skills; English for speakers of other languages (ESOL); and professional teaching materials.

In addition to books, newspapers and magazines should be available for students. There are some easy-to-read publications specifically geared for adult new readers, such as "News for You," which is available through New Readers Press, and "Views and Reviews," published by Literacy Volunteers of New York City.

Although more books are being written for adult beginning readers, some books written for children or young adults may also be appropriate, particularly in the areas of biography, science or social studies. When ordering children's books, it is important to be sensitive about an adult perspective and screen out books with childish pictures, format or subject matter inappropriate for adults.

BOOK ORDERING

In general, books can be ordered either directly through publishers or through distributors. To order from many smaller or foreign publishers, it may be easiest to go through distributors.

Below is a list of suggested publishers and distributors to contact. In compiling this list, we have tried to keep in mind the broad variety of needs of literacy programs that may be using this manual. That is why, in addition to listing materials appropriate for literacy programs, we have included ESOL publishers. In ordering catalogs, please consider your organization's specific needs. Some publishers may be willing to send free examination copies of books for review.

LIST FOR BOOK ORDERING

- **ALBSU**
Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
Kingsbourne House 229-231
High Holborn, London WC1V7DA,
England
Order through Avanti, see below.
- **American Bible Society**
1865 Broadway
New York, NY 10023
Telephone: 1-800-543-8000
Bibles in large print additions and in Spanish and other languages. Also, short bible stories for new readers, and cassette tapes of the bible.
- **Avanti Books**
1 Wellington Road
Stevenage, Herts SG2 9HR, England
Telephone: 0438-350155
Comprehensive catalog of British ABE materials from a variety of publishers, including Centerprise and ALBSU (Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit).
Includes materials written by students on beginning levels, people's history, and books about the Carribean.
It is easier to order from Avanti than directly from Centerprise or ALBSU.
- **Cambridge GED**
The Adult Education Program
Prentice-Hall
200 Old Tappan Rd.
Old Tappan, NJ 07675
Telephone: 1-800-922-0579
Follett ABE Reading Program, and the Adult Literacy Series, developed in conjunction with Literacy Volunteers of America.
- **Centerprise Publications**
136/138 Kingsland High Street
London E8 2NS, England
Order books directly from Avanti. Centerprise publishes many books written by adult beginning readers.
- **Children's Press**
5440 North Cumberland Avenue
Chicago, IL 60656
Telephone: 1-800-621-1115
A children's publisher with some non-fiction books of interest to adults.
- **Contemporary**
180 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60601
Telephone: 1-800-621-1918
Adult education catalog with books ranging from literacy level to pre-GED.
- **Dominie Press**
ESL/Literacy Catalogue
1361 Huntingwood Drive
Unit 7
Agincourt, Ontario
M1S 3J1, Canada
Books for teachers, ESL materials, titles published by East End Literacy Press, many of which are written by adult beginning readers.
- **Econo-Clad Books**
P.O. Box 1777
Topeka, KA 66601
Telephone: 1-800-255-3502
Books on history, AIDS, and substance abuse.

- **EMC Publishing**
Changing Times Education Service
300 York Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55101
Telephone: 1-800-328-1452
Career education, consumer education, home economics, and "Encounter Series."
- **Fearon-Janus**
500 Harbor Blvd.
Belmont, CA 94002
Telephone: 415-592-7810
Popular fiction and practical skills books. "Lifetimes" series of easy-to-read fiction. Also "Pacemaker" and "Fastback" series of high-low readers.
- **Globe Book Company, Quercus Division**
50 West 23 Street
New York, NY 10010
Telephone: 1-800-221-7994
Books for grades 6 - 12, including biographies, history, and science books.
- **Jamestown Publishers**
P.O. Box 9168
Providence, RI 02940
Telephone: 1-800-USA-READ
Adult Learner series and Jamestown Classic series.
- **Janus Books**
2501 Industrial Parkway West
Dept. K JA 89
Hayward, CA 94545
Telephone: 1-800-227-2375
Practical Living Skills, Government in Action, Survival Vocabulary, and Money Matter Guides.
- **Lectorum Publications**
137 West 14th Street
New York, NY 10011
Telephone: 212-929-2833
ESOL books.

- **Literacy Volunteers of America**
5795 Widewaters Parkway
Syracuse, NY 13214
Telephone: (315) 445-8000
Basic reading and ESOL books, also books for volunteer tutors and trainers. Includes Cambridge/LVA Adult Literacy Series and Writers' Voices.
- **Literacy Volunteers of New York City Publishing Project**
121 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10013
Telephone: 212-925-3001
Two series of books for adult new readers: Writers' Voices, written by well-known authors, and New Writers' Voices, written by adult literacy students.
- **New Readers Press**
Laubach Literacy International
Dept. 61 - Box 131
Syracuse, NY 13210
Telephone: 1-800-448-8878
Affiliated with Laubach Literacy International; a broad selection of books.
- **Scholastic Inc.**
P.O. Box 7501
2931 East McCurdy Street
Jefferson City, MO 65102
Adult action theme books, and a variety of reading and language arts materials K-12.
- **Scott, Foresman & Co.**
Lifelong Learning Books
1900 East Lake Avenue
Glenview, IL 60025
Adult readers library, biography, history, historical fiction, mystery, lifeskills.

- Steck Vaughn
P.O. Box 26015
Austin, TX 78755
Telephone: 1-800-531-5015
Adult education catalog with history, science,
and geography books.

BOOK DISTRIBUTORS

These distributors have catalogs and your program can order books from several publishers.

- Nkiru International Book Enterprises, Inc.
68 St. Marks Ave.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217
Telephone: 718-783-6306
- Desmond A. Reid Enterprises
P.O. Box 1168
Brooklyn, New York 11202
- W. Warner, Inc.
114-36 Francis Lewis Blvd.
Cambria Heights, New York 11411
Telephone: 718-776-7823



WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING YOUR LIBRARY

1 ■ What are the likely interests of adult learners you are serving or plan to serve?

2 ■ Where do you plan to have your library? Do you have the necessary space and book shelves?

3 ■ Have you reviewed any books for adult beginning readers in your local library or literacy program?

4 ■ What is your budget for materials? Is there any way you can obtain loans of free books?

5 ■ Have you ordered catalogs from the publishers listed in this manual?

PART III:

STARTING YOUR PROGRAM

CHAPTER 9 ■ ENROLLING ADULT LEARNERS

- Purposes of an Enrollment Program for Students
- The Literacy Volunteers' Student Enrollment Program: A Model
- Another Model for Student Enrollment

CHAPTER 10 ■ TRAINING VOLUNTEER TUTORS: THE LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF NEW YORK CITY MODEL

- Three-phase Tutor Training
- Principles of Adult Learning
- Techniques for Effective Training

CHAPTER 11 ■ STARTING YOUR EDUCATIONAL CENTER

- The Tutorial Group
- The Center Director's Role
- Setting Up Tutorial Groups
- Setting Up Your Library
- Center Management and Administration

CHAPTER 9 : ENROLLING ADULT LEARNERS

Developing a plan to enroll students is important. A very high proportion of students who contact literacy programs fail to show up or drop out within the first month after enrolling in the program. An enrollment process that is humanizing and establishes rapport with an incoming student is crucial.

The following descriptions of procedures used by Literacy Volunteers can help ensure successful student enrollment. These involve the prospective student's first contacts with the organization and models for student orientation.

INTAKE PROCEDURE

- 1 ■ **Phone Call.** When a prospective student makes a phone call to contact the program, a trained intake counselor provides the student with information about our program and how to get to the orientation. If a friend or relative calls for the student, we ask that the student call us directly.
- 2 ■ **Intake Card.** A card is filled out with student's name, address, telephone numbers, and hours available to attend the program.
- 3 ■ **Invitation to an Orientation.** The prospective student is invited to an orientation session. A letter with the date of the orientation and the address is sent as a follow-up reminder. If students do not show up, they receive invitations to attend orientations for up to a year.

THE ORIENTATION SERVES THESE PURPOSES:

Establishing Rapport. It is very important to make the incoming student feel welcome and to be sensitive toward his or her culture and values and previous experiences.

Giving Information. From the outset, the program's purposes and instructional approaches should be made clear to prospective students. Students currently in the program and educational staff provide incoming students with the background needed to make an informed decision about enrolling.

Assessment, Screening, and Referral. The orientation should assess the learner's skills in the areas important to the program. For a program focusing on basic reading and writing, it is important to determine the incoming student's reading and writing abilities. This can be done through oral or written testing, and getting samples of writing. If the program is not appropriate for the adult learner, referral information about other programs should be provided.

Establishing Goals. A learner-centered program begins with goal setting at the intake interview. Incoming students are asked about their interests and goals. Records of these are kept so that the students and instructors can start working towards these goals.

TWO MODELS FOR A STUDENT ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

Below are two models of a student enrollment process: one used by Literacy Volunteers of New York City which is appropriate for a large program; and one designed for a smaller program.

The Literacy Volunteers student enrollment program

All new students are invited to a monthly centralized enrollment program which has three sessions.

Overview of the Program. At the first session, prospective students are given an overview of the Literacy Volunteers educational program by student advocates (staff members who are graduates of our program) and by other staff. There is ample opportunity for questions. Following the overview, students who are interested in attending the program are asked to come back for testing.

Interviews and Testing. These sessions are devoted to interviews and testing to determine a student's reading level and learning goals. Volunteer intake counselors meet individually with prospective students to fill out intake forms and administer tests. Students are given an oral reading inventory and one or two standardized tests.

The testing determines whether students read below a sixth grade level. Those who are more advanced or who need another type of educational program are given referral information.

Reading and Writing Session. The final orientation meeting is a reading and writing session. This session enables incoming students to participate in a model group tutoring session. They are shown a videotape of adult literacy students in a writing group taught by Marilyn Boutwell,

Literacy Volunteers Education Director. This video, "Love to Write," is available through New Reader's Press. After the video, volunteer intake counselors conduct small group writing sessions. Students leave the orientation with a firm grasp of the Literacy Volunteers approach to participatory education.

Placement: After they complete these three sessions, students are referred to a center and matched with a group. Please see the Chapter 11 for more information on starting tutorial groups.

Another model for student enrollment:

Smaller literacy programs may not find it necessary to have such a lengthy intake process. Rather than enrolling students as a group, many programs prefer to have a more intimate one-on-one interview. Below is an alternative model for a student enrollment program:

Orientation interview and testing session. A staff member or volunteer meets individually with a new student to provide an overview of the program. During this meeting, the student's reading and writing levels are also assessed. Referral information is given to people with skills above the literacy level taught by the program.

Testing session. Depending on the extent of testing used by a program, it may be advisable to hold a separate testing session.

Opportunity to observe a tutoring group. Before being placed in a group, the prospective student is invited to sit in on a tutoring session and meet students attending the program. The student is also given a tour of the center and its library.

References: Guidelines for Effective Adult Literacy Programs, Steven E. Mayer, Rainbow Research, Inc., 401 West Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55408.



WORKSHEET

Planning your student enrollment program

- 1 ■ List the steps to your intake process, from the first contact through placing a student in a tutoring group.

- 2 ■ Decide who on your staff will handle each component of your enrollment program.

- 3 ■ Review how long your intake process will take from the initial inquiry through placement.

CHAPTER 10: TRAINING VOLUNTEER TUTORS

THE LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF NEW YORK CITY MODEL

Since 1973, Literacy Volunteers has provided training for volunteers who teach adults to read and write. We have pioneered the use of whole-language small group instruction and writing instruction for adult literacy students. These techniques are integrated into the tutor training.

THREE PHASE TUTOR TRAINING WORKSHOP

Phase I consists of six sessions of three hours each over a three-week period. In these sessions volunteers are introduced to the tools they will need to help students learn to read and write. They learn whole-language methods of teaching reading and writing. Volunteers learn how to help students determine their goals and how to work in small groups. In addition to attending the sessions, participants read a training manual and complete written homework assignments.

Phase II consists of a one-month apprenticeship at one of our educational centers. The apprenticeship enables volunteers to apply the knowledge they have gained in Phase I in the actual tutoring situation.

Volunteers observe ongoing tutoring groups and may also start tutoring. They work closely with the center director and experienced volunteers, who offer frequent feedback. A trainee is paired with an experienced tutor prior to working alone with a group.

Phase III consists of three three-hour sessions in which volunteers learn how to teach spelling, phonics and editing. These sessions also provide volunteers with a chance to talk with other volunteers and staff about their initial experiences

working with students. Please see the end of this chapter for an outline of the Literacy Volunteers tutor training workshop.

The format and content of the workshop are based on the assumption that people learn by associating new information with information they already know. The workshop helps volunteers become aware of what they already know about reading and writing, and what they do as "expert" readers and writers. Then, it helps them apply this knowledge to something they don't know—how to teach students to read and write.

Training techniques such as lectures, demonstrations, role plays, and small group work are used for different purposes during the workshop. Lectures and demonstrations are effective in introducing new material, and role playing and small group work enable tutors to practice new techniques.

Collaborative learning among the volunteers is encouraged during group work. It frees tutors up to discover their own reading and writing strategies, and to develop their own strategies for working in the groups. The work in small groups during the tutor training serves as a model for the work with groups of students at the educational centers.

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE TRAINING

At Literacy Volunteers we have found that training volunteers to tutor adults using student-centered whole-language instructional methods is a challenge. These approaches are unfamiliar to most volunteers, and sometimes even highly

motivated volunteers have resistance to learning something new. The trainer should acknowledge this and help the volunteer overcome this resistance during the course of the training.

Techniques for Effective Training

Orient volunteers. Every prospective tutor should attend an orientation before tutor training. The orientation is the first step to lowering the volunteer's resistance to new approaches. Invite students and tutors in the program to talk about their successes. Volunteers who are uncomfortable with what they have learned about the program will often screen themselves out after attending the orientation.

Clarify expectations of volunteers. Make the goals of the training and the expectations for the volunteer's performance clear from the outset. Before the training starts give the volunteers a schedule of training dates and material covered. Tell them about required reading assignments, homework and evaluation of their performance during role playing sessions and in the apprenticeship period.

Have clear training objectives. Convey these objectives to the volunteers at the beginning of each session. Encourage volunteers to set objectives for themselves, and give them feedback on how they are meeting these objectives.

Acknowledge resistance. During the training acknowledge any resistance to the new methods presented during the training, and let the volun-

teers talk about their feelings. At the same time, explain the need to learn the new approaches and the reason student-centered, whole-language approaches are preferable to more traditional methods. Give the trainees an ample chance to practice the new approaches during small group work during the training.

Involve adult learners. Adult learners can be co-trainers. They offer invaluable insights into the learning process which can be helpful to tutors in developing effective tutoring skills. Involving students in the training helps volunteers understand the participatory nature of the program, and helps them get to know what adult learners are really like.

Screen out inappropriate volunteers. For the final training session, Literacy Volunteers requires volunteers to plan and teach a lesson in a role playing format. An experienced volunteer or staff member gives feedback on this lesson, as do fellow trainees. This practical session serves as a bridge to Phase II, where tutors go to learning centers for an apprenticeship.

In addition, this session is used as a screening device. Not all volunteers have the knack for tutoring; some are uncomfortable with the group process. Volunteers who do not demonstrate good tutoring skills during a role playing session may be offered alternative volunteer options.



LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF NEW YORK CITY TUTOR TRAINING WORKSHOP

PHASE I

Session 1

- The writing process: looking at your experiences in order to understand what happens when you write
- The workshop format for teaching writing

Session 2

- The writing process and workshop revisited
- The reading process: looking at your own experiences in order to understand what happens when you read

Session 3

- Evaluating materials for use with adult beginning readers
- The workshop format for teaching reading

Session 4

- Understanding language differences and their implications for literacy instruction
- Using the language experience approach to generate easy-to-read texts for beginning readers

Session 5

- Working effectively as part of a group
- Helping learners clarify goals

Session 6

- Individual presentations

PHASE II

The second phase of the training is a supervised apprenticeship at one of our educational centers.

PHASE III

During the third phase of training, volunteers continue to spend one evening or morning per week at their educational centers.

Session 1

- Observing student writing in order to develop editing skills

Session 2

- Observing student writing in order to develop spelling skills

Session 3

- Observing student reading in order to develop word recognition skills

CHAPTER 11: STARTING YOUR EDUCATIONAL CENTER

The educational center is more than a physical space for students and tutors to meet. It is a learning community. All participants of the program take part in creating this community — students, volunteers, and professional staff.

The primary purpose of the educational center is to create an environment conducive to learning, one that incorporates principles of adult learning and gets around barriers that prevented students from learning in the past. According to researcher Elisabeth Hayes, adult basic education students have identified low self-confidence, social disapproval (believing family or friends would disapprove), and situational barriers that prevented them from attending the program as barriers to learning.

Although the educational center cannot remove all these barriers, it can offer an environment where learning is encouraged and has a purpose. The learning community is a place to acquire and test out new skills. As students feel more confident in their abilities, they are able to use these skills outside the center.

THE TUTORIAL GROUP

At Literacy Volunteers of New York City, the tutorial group is the core of the educational program. Volunteers work with students in groups of four to eight. Most groups are lead by two volunteers working collaboratively.

Through small group instruction, the roles of teachers and learners are redefined. All participants bring skills, ideas, and experiences to share with members of the group. Students are encouraged to teach as well as learn from each other.

Tutors work along with students on their own reading and writing projects.

Students work with their groups to plan strategies to reach the goals they have established for themselves, which can range from learning to fill out a job application to learning to write poetry. There is no set curriculum for the group, but the instructional course is set by the students, with guidance and support by the tutors.

Reading and writing activities are planned so that each member of the group can participate from a position of strength and build on that strength. For example, a student who finds reading a book too difficult will learn to read his own dictated stories first, and then move on to reading books. The group structure encourages active participation of each group member. For example, during a writing session, students and tutors read their writing aloud and receive feedback from other group members. The tutor or a student from the group facilitates the session.

THE CENTER DIRECTOR'S ROLE

The job of the center director is to help create a good learning environment that benefits both students and tutors. The director's job is to set up the center, establish management systems to keep student and tutor attendance records, set up a center library, and start tutorial groups.

After this initial phase, the center director maintains a quality program by providing support for and evaluation of students and tutors. Further discussion of the center director's role is included in Chapter 12.

Setting Up Tutorial Groups

After tutors are trained and students attend an orientation, it is time to set up tutorial groups. Students and tutors are welcomed and informally interviewed by the center director. The director should have a copy of pertinent intake information, such as students' test scores. The center director will match students and tutors to form a group, taking into consideration factors such as personalities, interests, and each student's reading level.

At Literacy Volunteers most groups are mixed in terms of students' reading levels. This enables more advanced students to share their knowledge with beginners. Before placing a new student in a group, the center director may provide the student with the opportunity to sit in with one or more groups informally.

Setting Up the Center Library

The center library is a vital part of the program. Library materials should be geared to adults, and for the most part be easy enough for students to read on their own. Materials written for children can be included in a section of the library for parents to bring home to read to their children. (See Chapter 8 for a suggested list of publishers).

The materials in the library should be organized and displayed in ways to make them most accessible to all readers. Displaying books so that students can see their covers makes it easier for beginning readers to choose their own books. Books can be organized according to difficulty as well as subject matter.

Displays to highlight the collection by theme, such as poetry or African-American history, help increase its use. Audio tapes of easy-to-read books recorded by volunteers or bought from publishers are a good addition to the library. The

responsibility of organizing the library and finding materials of interest to individual students can be taken on by a trained volunteer.

Center Management

Managing the center includes setting up systems, keeping records of student and tutor attendance, and evaluating student progress. While this is far from glamorous, it is necessary for the smooth operation of the educational center.

Attendance Policy

Any successful program must require both students and tutors to attend on a regular basis. An attendance policy must include some flexibility to take into account the many demands on the time of program participants, but it must also recognize that all group members are affected by poor attendance of other members. Many programs have minimum attendance requirements.

Recordkeeping

The center director is responsible for keeping records of student and volunteer attendance and student and volunteer progress. Most programs find it desirable to have a sign-in form for students and volunteers to fill out prior to each session.

Evaluating Student Progress

Many literacy programs are required by their funding sources to administer standardized reading tests to students. Since these tests are usually administered at time intervals based on actual student hours in the program, keeping accurate records of attendance is essential.

In addition to these standardized tests, Literacy Volunteers and many other literacy programs are developing alternative assessment instruments. Some alternative ways of helping programs assess student progress:

1 ■ Asking students to set their own educational goals, and later assessing whether or not they are meeting these goals through instruction.

2 ■ Keeping folders of student writing and lists of books students have read. Reviewing these folders periodically and comparing reading levels of books and writing skills in student pieces.

3 ■ Conducting more formal, objective assessment of student reading through analysis of students' oral reading.



PART IV:

HELPING YOUR PROGRAM GROW AND DEVELOP

CHAPTER 12 ■ CREATING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

- Learning Celebrations
- Student Publishing
- Support for Students
- Supervision of and Support for Tutors
- Assessing Tutor Performance

CHAPTER 13 ■ DEVELOPING A PARTICIPATORY LITERACY PROGRAM

- Students on Staff
- Student Leadership Committee
- Student Representation on the Board of Directors
- The Transition Group
- Graduation and Alumni Association

CHAPTER 12: CREATING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

The educational center is a learning environment, a place which promotes learning for all members of the community—staff, tutors, and students. This feeling of community can be fostered by planning learning celebrations, publishing student writing, and offering support for students and tutors. In addition, the educational center director can encourage students and tutors to give presentations on topics of interest and to take part in planning events like dances and picnics.

LEARNING CELEBRATIONS

Learning celebrations help make the educational center a real community. Many programs hold celebrations on a monthly or quarterly basis. During these events, students and tutors mingle with persons outside their own tutorial group and the center acknowledges everyone's accomplishments.

Celebrations can include sessions in which students and tutors read a piece of writing aloud, or may include sharing special books or word games developed by group members. Celebrations are also a good time to honor people who have made special contributions to the center and to give out certificates of attendance to students and volunteers. Sharing a potluck meal can add to the festive atmosphere.

STUDENT PUBLISHING

Publications of student writing are an integral part of a literacy program. Students take them-

selves more seriously as writers when their work is published because it is so exciting to see one's work in print. It is also valuable for student writers to reach an audience beyond the tutorial group. Student-written publications also help connect reading and writing, and they are an extremely popular source of reading material.

Literacy Volunteers of New York City has several publications that give students and tutors an opportunity to publish work. Each educational center publishes a newsletter, which may include center events, stories by students and tutors, advice columns and crossword puzzles. *The Big Apple Journal* is a program-wide journal of student writing. It is published several times a year in book form. The Literacy Volunteers Publishing Project also publishes a paperback book series, "New Writers' Voices," written by adult literacy students. These books can be ordered directly from Literacy Volunteers of New York City or from Literacy Volunteers of America.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

The center director should meet with students after they start the program to find out whether the program is meeting their needs, and then on a regular basis thereafter. The center director makes herself available to students for questions and individual conferences. In addition, she helps students organize to give each other support by forming student advocacy teams and support groups (please see Chapter 13 on student leadership).

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT FOR TUTORS

Ongoing support and supervision of volunteer tutors by the center director enhances the volunteers' skills. The center director gives tutors support in the following ways:

- 1 ■ Observing learning groups and evaluating tutors. The center director observes both tutoring techniques and students' learning strategies.
- 2 ■ Planning ongoing training sessions for tutors. These sessions are planned to address topics of interest to tutors or students as well as areas of weakness identified by the center director. The sessions can be taught by staff, experienced tutors, or students. Some examples of topics for training sessions include: spelling, writing and group dynamics.
- 3 ■ Establishing good strategies for communication with tutors. This may include keeping dialogue journals (which is a running conversation on paper between the center director and individual tutors), holding regular tutor meetings, either individually at the center or by phone.

ASSESSING TUTOR PERFORMANCE

There are two ways of assessing tutor performance: through self-assessment and through assessment by the center director. The center director assesses a tutor's performance on an informal basis and also through formal observations. The following page has a self-assessment form used by Literacy Volunteers.

Self-assessment helps tutors take control of their learning. Tutors are asked to fill out this form before the center director observes their group. During the observation, the director takes notes and makes his or her own evaluation of the tutor's performance. After the observation, she meets with the tutor privately to give feedback. Further training or help for the tutor may be planned, as needed.

As an education professional, the center director helps the tutors develop as teachers. It is his or her job to ensure high performance by tutors. Volunteer tutors who are not meeting these standards may be asked to leave the program, following guidelines similar to those for paid staff.



READING

- ## WRITING

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<i>Consistently</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Not yet</i>

- 2 ■ Do we agree on the general direction that the work is heading?
- 3 ■ Do we work together as a team during sessions?
- 4 ■ Do we define and share responsibilities?

<i>Consistently</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Not yet</i>

RESPONSIBILITY

- 1 ■ Do I give advance notice to my site coordinator, co-tutor and students when I will be absent?
- 2 ■ Do I provide suggestions for activities for students during my absence?

OPEN QUESTIONS

What are my greatest strengths as a tutor right now?

Do I have any present frustrations related to tutoring?

Where would I like additional assistance or training?

COMMENTS

CHAPTER 13: DEVELOPING A PARTICIPATORY LITERACY PROGRAM

Below are some ways that Literacy Volunteers has been working to further student participation and leadership in our program. These include hiring students as staff members, a student leadership program, student representation on the Board of Directors, and peer support for transition and graduation. We encourage you to develop additional ways of including adult learners as full participants in your program.

STUDENTS ON STAFF

Since 1985, Literacy Volunteers has had students on staff. These students constitute an advocacy team which advises the executive staff on student needs. They speak on their own behalf before the media and community groups to heighten public awareness of issues facing adult learners. The advocacy team also develops and presents programs at learning centers on topics of interest to students, such as AIDS, African-American and Hispanic history, domestic violence, drug and alcohol problems, housing, and voter education.

In addition, students on staff work at learning centers as center assistants, and help with the student enrollment program. Their role is vital to the strength of the organization.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

A student committee, which is a leadership group with representation from each program center, works with the advocacy team in promoting student participation in the educational program. In addition, the committee members attend national

conferences and provide technical assistance to other organizations on enhancing student leadership.

STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Since 1984, a student has been nominated by fellow students to serve on the Literacy Volunteers Board of Directors. In this position, a student is able to help advise the board and make policies regarding student needs and organizational goals.

THE TRANSITION GROUP

At Literacy Volunteers of New York City, when students, in collaboration with the educational center director, decide they are ready to leave the program, they have the option of joining the Transition Group.

The Transition Group is a peer support group with a staff advisor and volunteer facilitators. Instead of being referred by staff to another educational program, students help each other acquire the necessary skills to find a program that suits their needs. The transition group meets once a week for two months. During this time students visit other educational programs, evaluate them, and bring back their findings to the group. Their goal is to find a new educational program by the end of a two-month period, at which time they officially graduate from Literacy Volunteers.

GRADUATION AND THE STUDENT ALUMNI GROUP

At Literacy Volunteers of New York City, graduation is a special event. Everyone in the program participates, and guests are invited to join in the celebration. Graduation certificates are awarded, and there is food and a guest speaker. Graduates are invited to join a student-organized Literacy Volunteers' Alumni Association. The Alumni Association enables graduates to become mentors for other students and to play a continuing leadership role in the organization.

TRANSITION GROUP AGREEMENT

I have decided that I am ready to graduate from the Literacy Volunteers regular program. Starting today, _____
I understand that I am no longer in my regular tutoring group and that I will not be able to return to the regular program. I agree to join the transition group which will run for two months starting today.

As a member of the transition group, I agree to explore other programs and share what I learn with the group members. I will keep a notebook of the steps I follow to get into another program.

Signed _____

Date _____



CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this manual we noted that although many people know there is a great need for literacy services in the United States, information on what is involved in starting and maintaining a quality literacy program generally has not been available to organizations outside the literacy field.

This manual was written to provide this information. We discussed four stages in planning for and starting a literacy program. Models and suggestions from Literacy Volunteers' own experience in running a program are offered. You will need to adapt these models to the unique needs of your own organization.

We would welcome comments or suggestions on the content or format of the manual. We would especially be interested in learning how the information in the manual has been helpful to you in starting your own literacy program.

If you would like further information on the technical assistance that Literacy Volunteers can offer your organization, please contact us at:

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